

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact Betty VanDeventer 402.471.4537 betty.vandeventer@nebraska.gov

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REPORT ON NEBRASKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS RELEASED

A report on Nebraska public schools and student performance was released today during a news conference in Lincoln.

The State of the Schools Report highlights the performance of groups of students on state reading, mathematics and writing tests as well as science. The Nebraska State Accountability test results for all students were released earlier. Parents received reports on the progress of their children earlier from their school district.

This report includes performance for groups of students, including race and ethnicity, poverty, special education and English Language Learners by district and school building as well as a new Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate.

Overall, 73 percent of the students tested in grades 3-8 and 11 met or exceeded state reading standards, an improvement over last year when 69 percent were proficient. The first mathematics test results showed that 63 percent were proficient.

Education Commissioner Roger Breed said he expects mathematics scores to improve in future years since that has been the trend historically in other academic areas, including reading.

In writing, 89 percent of the fourth graders were proficient and 90 percent of the eighth graders. Science results ranged from 96 percent proficient at the fourth grade to 87 percent proficient at the eighth grade. Schools will administer a new science test next year.

The Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate showed that 85 percent of Nebraska high school seniors graduated in 2010-11. This rate looks only at students who have graduated in four years or less.

Breed encouraged schools to study their data – including the performance of groups of students – to identify instructional strategies that help all students perform at higher levels.

Students who are learning English for the first time in school, students with disabilities and migrant students oftentimes have greater challenges in the classroom. Overall, there continues to be gaps in the scores of Hispanic students and black students when compared to the scores of white students.

Teachers and students are working hard to help all students meet state academic standards, Breed said, noting his frequent visits to Nebraska schools. “Nebraska teachers are helping our students reach higher levels of learning every day,” Breed said.

Breed encouraged parents and Nebraska residents to study the report to learn how the schools and students in their community are performing and how they can support their efforts.

The State of the Schools Report is available on the Nebraska Department of Education's homepage at: www.education.ne.gov.